

11

code 72. Computer 78 then searches its memory (i.e., hard disk drive 80, CD ROM 82 or floppy/RAM card 84) for a bar code and verbal message match. When a match is found, computer 78 transfers the appropriate stored digital data to a digital voice decoder 90. The decoded information is then converted into soundwaves by speaker 36 for identification by the listener/user.

The foregoing description of the present invention has been directed to particular embodiments. It will be apparent, however, to those skilled in the art that modifications and changes in either the apparatus, system and/or method may be made without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention. Therefore, it is the Applicants' intention that the following claims cover all such equivalent modifications and variations which fall within the true spirit and scope of this invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for audio labeling products with a reusable label, comprising:

- releasibly securing a label bearing an audio recorder to a first product;
- sending a first verbal message concerning said first product to said label;
- recording said first verbal message in said recorder;
- subsequently retrieving said first verbal message in audio format from said recorder;
- releasing said label from said first product and thereafter releasibly securing said label to a second product;
- while erasing said first verbal message, sending a second verbal message concerning said second product to said label;

12

recording said second verbal message in said recorder; and

subsequently retrieving said second verbal message in audio format from said recorder.

2. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein said recording step comprises inputting an electrical signal corresponding to said first and second verbal messages into an addressable array of storage elements.

3. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein said retrieving step comprises:

outputting a stored first and second electrical signal corresponding to said first and second verbal messages from an addressable array of storage elements; and

converting said first and second electrical signals to signals similar to said first and second verbal messages.

4. An instructional apparatus, comprising:

- a bar code label attachable to a product;
- recording means capable of recording a vocal message into a storage device corresponding to said bar code label, wherein said recording means comprises a voice recorder capable of recording said vocal message as telephone quality voice input; and
- retrieving means capable of reproducibly retrieving said vocal message indicative of an identifiable characteristic associated with said product, wherein said retrieving means comprises a speaker operable to reproduce and vocalize said recorded vocal message as telephone quality voice output.

* * * * *

Add
A1